United Nations S/2017/976

Security Council

Distr.: General
20 November 2017

Original: English

Letter dated 20 November 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you a statement released on 19 November 2017 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Libya following a media outlet report issued earlier this week on slave auctions in Libya (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Elmahdi S. **Elmajerbi**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

17-20633 (E) 221117 221117

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 20 November 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

Statement of the Media Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of National Accord, issued in Tripoli on 19 November 2017

The Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs has followed with deep concern media reports about the exploitation of illegal migrants for forced labour by certain criminals and depraved persons. The Ministry expresses its rejection and condemnation of such inhumane practices, which are incompatible with the culture and heritage of the Libyan people. It stresses that what has been published in the media in this regard is under investigation by the relevant Libyan agencies. If these allegations prove true, all those involved will be punished. Anyone implicated in such despicable crimes will be investigated, prosecuted and punished under the law.

The Ministry also affirms its full and unequivocal commitment to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations in this regard, and stresses that it will vigorously enforce national legislation that criminalizes trafficking in human beings and slavery.

At the same time, Libya is well aware that certain regional parties want to turn it into a destination for the absorption and relocation of migrants. It has already warned repeatedly that superficial and ineffective efforts to address this problem are hampering its efforts to curb this phenomenon and opening the way for organized criminal gangs to engage in criminal activities. Libya also finds it extremely odd that it is being classified as a zone of conflict and instability by the very parties that are trying to turn it into a haven for large numbers of migrants. That raises a number of questions for us.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs warns of the gravity of the current situation, which, in the absence of a spirit of collective responsibility, is being exploited by criminal gangs to use forced labour to generate financial resources for their criminal and terrorist plots. They are acting as middlemen to smuggle migrants to the other side of the Mediterranean or enlist them as mercenaries in the ranks of the terrorists. We call on the international community to join together in a spirit of joint responsibility and cooperation to help Libya confront this imminent threat to its social fabric and cultural heritage, and to humankind as a whole. That will require adopting an effective approach that addresses the causes of migration instead of allowing certain parties to slander Libya's good name in an effort to cover up their inability to deal with this problem and achieve imaginary gains that are at odds with the reality that we are living today.

The Ministry stresses that the Government and people of the State of Libya are standing up against such inhumane practices. It recalls that many years ago, Libya called for proactive approaches to address this phenomenon, including building institutional capacity and developing projects in countries of origin to combat illegal migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings. Such measures were called for by the joint Africa-European Union resolution adopted in Tripoli in 2006. Libya calls on its regional and international friends and partners to cooperate proactively and constructively to address these unfortunate phenomena with responsibility, wisdom and boldness.